



WOLF'S HEAD

OUTLAWS AND REBELLION IN FEUDAL ENGLAND

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE
CORE SYSTEM

PAUL MITCHENER

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Wolf's Head

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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful,
terrible, impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events
portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people,
winners of archery contests, oppressive nobles, eldritch spirits of
the forest, castles owned by dodgy sorcerers, or heroic outlaws
fighting for justice is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

Thanks go to the playtesters of Wolf's Head: Nigel Clarke, Jag Goroya,
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OUTLAWS IN NORMAN ENGLAND

Caput Lupinum

"I'll fight them. I don't expect to win, but someone's got to stand up and fight for justice and a fairer life. And when I'm finally beaten, I won't go down alone, and I will be an example to others."

— Rosamund Le Tellier, disgraced noble

Feudal England is a cruel and unfair place. The commoners labour all their lives for the benefit of knights and lords to feast and fight. Most commoners aren't even allowed to leave the land allotted to them. Whenever there's war, another punitive tax comes along, and whole villages are burned for not paying.

But not you. You've had enough, and snapped, defying the local lord. You're now an outlaw—a wolf's head—in the name of the law, and labelled a bandit or worse, but you're not alone. There are others who think like you, and you're more than just bandits. You're rebels, fighting for the common people, doing what you can to help them and spitting in the eyes of the nobility while you're at it.

* * *

Let his be a wolf's head is the sentence passed upon an outlaw. A wolf's head has no rights, and anyone may legally harm them. They are a pariah, a lone wolf, dangerous, and a beast rather than a person, who decent people must defend themselves against. A wolf's head is unable to find honest work, and crime is a means of survival. It is forbidden by law to give a wolf's head shelter, food, or any other means of support.

Some wolf's heads have earned their sentences and indeed prey on ordinary people like vicious wolves. But your characters are different. They're no ordinary outlaws, but warriors fighting against an unjust authority that oppresses the people. Of course, this makes them even worse than common outlaws to the powers that be.

You may notice some spellings that look off in this book. Well, that's just British English—don't panic.

The Outlaw Story

“Justice? Don’t make me laugh. When I was in the service of the noble swine, I was given orders to burn down a village and kill everyone who came running out. That’s what the nobles think justice is.”

— **Thomas Willoughby, former soldier**

In stories portraying medieval outlaws, they’re typically romanticised, victims of injustice. Some are peasants, and some nobles who have lost their lands. Often in England such nobles are part of the Saxon nobility displaced by the Normans.

Some outlaw tales have happy endings, as the wicked noble responsible for an outlaw’s fate meets messy justice, and the outlaw re-enters ordinary society. A noble might have their lands returned to them. Sometimes there is a new king, who makes everything right. Other outlaw tales have tragic endings, as an outlaw band has no chance of matching and overwhelming the forces of the legitimate, if cruel and unjust, authorities.

In *Wolf’s Head* we go further. Our outlaws are rebels. It is not just that a local lord or even king is unjust—to our outlaws, the whole feudal system is rotten.

Our outlaws quite likely have anachronistic ideas—and ideals—about equality and freedom, as well as a drive for vengeance against unjust lords and for relieving the burden on poor, overtaxed peasants. Contemporary outlaw tales often highlight the rebellious hero, and ours are just the same.

Outlaws don’t have to fit into society or into the moulds society has ready for them. There’s a freedom in being a wolf’s head. There is no difference between former commoner and former noble outlaws, no distinctions of noble ranks, none between freemen and serfs. Gender roles in Norman England are quite rigid, but these do not apply to outlaws. The exact form of Christianity represented by the Church is the only sanctioned religion in England, but outlaws could be heretics or non-Christians, either by personal belief or by culture. Your characters in particular are not constrained in concept by the societal norms of the time.

The setting presented here takes place in the year 1106 in the area around the New Forest, on the south coast of England. It is less than forty years after the Norman Conquest, and feelings of rebellion and resentment still simmer. William the Conqueror himself ordered the creation of the forest and displaced commoners from their lands.

England’s king, Henry I, has returned from war in Normandy with his older brother, who was stirring up constant trouble against his reign, in tow as prisoner. King Henry has rewarded his most loyal men with lands and titles. The nobility who have lost out are resorting to new means of extortion, the nobility who have gained are seeking to thoroughly exploit their rewards, and mercenaries from the war are seeking pay.

In *Wolf’s Head*, the PCs play local outlaws seeking to alleviate the suffering of the poor. They not only oppose the cruel local lords, but the system allowing their cruelty. Their end is in all likelihood tragic, but they might leave a lasting legacy of fame and justice. Their tales have yet to be written. This is their story.



A FINITE CAMPAIGN

The outlaws in *Wolf's Head* walk a fine line between daring acts of courage in fighting for the common people, both for alleviation of their suffering and for their rights, and drawing too much attention to themselves, bringing on the wrath of the authorities of the land, who have the resources to wipe them out once they become too much of a menace.

After a few sessions, the campaign will come to a conclusion, as the outlaws draw the notice of the king and his senior ministers, and they bring the forces to bear to wipe out the outlaws. Probably they won't survive, but perhaps they'll have done enough for their story to inspire future generations, for a legacy of justice to survive them. And the manner in which the rebellion of the outlaws ends is not foreordained. The battle may seem doomed, but it is not in vain.

THE USE OF HISTORY

This setting is based on history but takes some liberties, even beyond the existence of subtle magic. The New Forest region described in this book is a mixture of historical fact, speculation, and pure invention. Some parts of the setting presented later on, such the Rufus Stone being the place where King William Rufus fell, come from later historical legends rather than facts believed by most modern historians. The destruction of villages when the New Forest was created also has a place in legend, but may have been exaggerated.

So feel free to take similar liberties. Aim to capture the flavour without worrying too much about fine details and precise historical facts. If you want to, you could easily change the game to take place in another time in medieval England, such as during the Anarchy or the reign of King John. You could move away from actual history and invent a monarch with the characteristics of some of the worst kings. This game is yours. Do what makes it fun for you.

The Feudal Order

“The message of the Bible is to help the poor, not burn their villages. And the nobility are no better than commoners. Until the Church realises that, they’re as bad as the oppressors.”

— **Simon Grave, excommunicated priest**

Society in Norman England is divided into three groups: the nobility, the peasants, and the Church. There is little social mobility—nobles are nobles because they are born nobles, and the same goes for peasants. Both the nobility and the peasantry have different ranks, though, and movement between those ranks is possible.

Those at the bottom, who make up the vast majority of people, have few rights and fewer opportunities, and the nobility thrives through taxation of the labours of others. The nobility has a traditional duty to protect the peasants they tax, but events such as war remove even that. And war is common. There are the Crusades, strife in Normandy, and the fact that for the first few generations after William the Conqueror, not a single king has come to the throne without at least some war.

The nobility are at the top of the heap and collect taxes from the peasants on their lands. Most nobles are vassals to nobles higher up the chain, owing them military service in exchange for their lands. A monetary payment instead of direct military service is acceptable. The lowest-ranking nobles are knights, then come barons, sheriffs, and earls, with the king and royalty above them all.

There are two broad classes of peasants: serfs and freemen. The serfs are legally bound to the land they work, and are not allowed to move to work other land or seek employment elsewhere. They are not in any sense free. The freemen, although peasants, are free to seek whatever employment they can find. In hard times, however, this can mean they have even less security than serfs.

Within a town, all men are said to be free, and a serf who lives in a town for a year becomes legally a freeman. But only one in ten people in the country live in a town. Besides, towns are dangerous, crowded, unhealthy places. Most towns pay taxes to a sheriff, though some have charters, collecting their own taxes and seeing to their own defence. The workers in a town organise themselves into craft and merchant guilds, who look after their own. Finding employment without connections is likely to be impossible, and a rich freeman who oversees a guild can be as oppressive as any noble.

The Church stands somewhat outside the ordinary system. Freemen and members of the nobility can join its ranks. It has a hierarchy of its own, including lay members, priests, bishops, and archbishops, who in turn answer to the cardinals and ultimately the Pope. Those near the top of the Church hierarchy, such as bishops and powerful abbots and abbesses, usually come from the nobility.

Every noble has a chapel, and every village a church. The Church is everywhere, and it both supports the feudal system and alleviates some of its excesses. Priests preach that God has granted earthly authority to the monarch and spiritual authority to the Church, and that the division between the nobility and peasants is a part of the divine order. That said, the Church also provides alms for the poor and aid for the sick, and the commandments of Christian conduct apply to nobles as well as peasants.

CHARACTERS

Aspects

Player characters in *Wolf's Head* have the following aspects, focused on different elements of being a rebellious, idealistic outlaw.

High Concept: Just as in *Fate Core*, your high concept is what you do, how you might begin to define a character with a short phrase. Are you a skilled forester and archer? A former knight fallen on hard times? A common thief who had the misfortune to be caught and now dreams of higher things? An intimidating thug with a heart, of course, of gold? A learned woman or man of the Church accused of heresy? One regarded as an outsider to the country who fell foul of prejudice?

Background: What did you do before you were an outlaw? Were you an oppressed serf? A knight? A man or woman of the Church? A skilled crafter in a town? How did you fit in, or not fit in, to the structures of Feudal England?

Wolf's Head: How did you become an outlaw? Did you commit a desperate crime and get caught? Were you falsely accused by a rival? Did you fall victim to a noble's brutality, your fate caught up in them trying to "tidy up"? Do you have an ongoing personal enemy? Name and shame them in this aspect!

Belief: You're not just a thug or a thief, though you're outlawed in the eyes of the authorities. What beliefs do you have which make you a rebel, fighting and stealing for what you believe to be right?

Goal: There are many injustices in the world, and the authorities are unjust oppressors. But you can't overthrow them all at once. What particular injustice do you seek to put right? Or do you have a less lofty personal goal? If you triumph, your goal will be your legacy. What will it be?

The Band Aspect

The PCs have formed an outlaw band with shared bonds of friendship and common enemies. How did they come together? What keeps them working as a team? What drives the band into action?

Answering some of these questions as a group will provide another aspect, the **band aspect**. Any player can invoke the band aspect, and it can be compelled against any of them.

Examples of Band Aspects:

CHOSEN OF THE OLD GOD, THE HUNTER;
GEOFFREY D'YTANE MUST PAY FOR HIS CRIMES;
PROTECTORS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE NEW FOREST;
WE'RE FAMILY, WITH BONDS STRONGER THAN BLOOD



Skills and Languages

We make the following minor changes to the *Fate Core* skill list to suit a game of medieval outlaws.

- **Resources:** The PCs are outlaws. They do not have a stable income, and do not accumulate treasure, so they have no Resources skill. In its place, see the rules for “*Treasure*” (page 9).
- **Ride:** Replace Drive with Ride, used when riding horses or driving carts. The scope of the skill is similar.

Most people in Feudal England are illiterate, but there are plenty of exceptions among merchants, the nobility, and especially the clergy.

Any PC with Lore at Average (+1) or higher is literate in any languages they speak.

There are two main languages in Norman England: English (which today is called Old English) and Norman French. Eventually these languages will merge to form the modern English language, but they are separate. For simplicity, it is safest to assume that all the PCs speak both of these languages. Some nobles will only speak Norman French, not understanding English, and plenty of commoners will not speak Norman French, though those in regular contact with the nobility will, by necessity.

The other relevant language is Latin, which is the language of the educated, the academic, and of course the Church. Any character with Lore at Good (+3) or higher also knows Latin.

Some minority groups have languages of their own. If your character concept suggests you know another language, such as Hebrew, then you know it.

Stunts

Here are some optional stunts, which capture some of the flavour of a *Wolf's Head* game or interact with some of its new rules, such as threat (page 12) and support (page 11).

Devout Faith: The truly devout Christian, who is both devoted to God and exhibits compassion to their fellows, especially those who are less well off, have power of a sort. Devout followers of other faiths, such as Jews and Muslims, are also sometimes found in England and have the same power. To take this stunt, your character must have an aspect linked to their faith.

If you have this stunt, the local gods (page 14) cannot harm you, and you are immune to their curses. The same is true of the curses of mortal sorcerers (page 16). Further, you can spend a fate point to share this protection with another character until the end of the scene.

Hero of the People: You're well known and popular, so you gain +1 to Rapport when speaking to commoners. Furthermore, at the end of any session where your involvement is known in an endeavour which gains any number of support points, your group gains another support point.

To take this stunt, you must have an aspect indicating your fame and popularity.

Old Friends at Court: Your friends at court give you a small degree of protection, though certainly not enough. When you see a noble who is linked to your old friends, you gain +1 to Rapport with that noble. Furthermore, at the end of each session, reduce your threat points by one, to a minimum of one.

To take this stunt, you must have an aspect linking you to the nobility. Possibly you were a noble before you became an outlaw.

Spirit Speaker: You're aware of the presence of old gods and spirits, and can both speak to them and hear them when they are present, even without you making a gift. Further, both you and the old powers feel a connection; you gain +2 to any Rapport rolls with the old spirits.

Advancement

A *Wolf's Head* game is intended to be fast, with a definite ending after several sessions. Character advancement therefore takes place at a quicker pace.

Do not use minor or major milestones. The pace is too rapid for minor milestones, and the game is too short for major milestones and the big changes they involve. However, at the end of each session, each PC gains a significant milestone.

A NOTE ON EQUIPMENT

In *Wolf's Head* we do not keep track of equipment, nor ordinary bonuses from arms and armour. Compared to the outlaws, certainly knights are better equipped, with chainmail suits and kite shields. This is reflected in their relevant aspects.

Some characters have stunts or aspects which refer to their weapons or protection, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

NEW MECHANICS

Treasure

If the PCs come into a large quantity of treasure, it's simply an aspect, such as PILE OF GOLD with one free invoke to be used when the treasure is spent. A large treasure might have as many as three free invokes. When all of the free invokes on a treasure aspect have been spent, the aspect is spent and gone.

Treasure can also be redistributed to increase the band's support (page 11).

A player can also spend a fate point to invoke a treasure aspect, spending just some of it or even showing it off to get a result. However, a treasure aspect can also be compelled. After all, it is valuable, meaning less scrupulous thieves and bandits may want it, and it is stolen, meaning the authorities may be trying to track it down. Treasure can also be bulky and conspicuous. It may be best to make use of it quickly.

A treasure aspect can be invoked to:

- Bribe a knight or a group of soldiers
- Get into the good graces of a church or abbey by making a donation
- Buy an expensive item such as a warhorse
- Buy a plot of land or a townhouse—although legal rights over property will be an issue for a wolf's head





Sources of Treasure

Sources of treasure include:

A Merchant's Cart: A merchant's goods might be worth a treasure aspect depending on what is being transported. To be worth stealing, the goods are likely something rarer and more valuable than food for the local market. It could be wine imported from the continent, rich cloth, or perfumes, to give a few examples.

A Lord's Treasury: The amount of treasure a lord has locked up generally depends on their importance. An ordinary lord is likely to have a treasure with one free invoke. Barons might have a treasury with two invokes. A sheriff's or earl's treasury could have three free invokes, though this is rare even for such senior nobles. Nobles tend to invest their treasure and spend what they don't invest in rich furnishings and objects of art. Hoarding coin is the act of a miser.

A Noble's Ransom: The outlaws may think of capturing a noble and ransoming them back to relatives or the authorities. If it's a hated enemy, their humiliation will be a bonus. The ransom, if successful, generates a treasure aspect with one free invoke.

Coin from Taxes: When goods taken in taxation are converted into coin, then is the time to steal it, especially as it is being transported. Such coin is a treasure aspect with one free invoke.

A Rich Church or Abbey: Robbing a church or abbey is not something heroic; after all, one of the functions of the church is giving alms to the poor. There is a key exception, though, which is when the head of the church or abbey is himself corrupt, and the treasures hoarded by the church were stolen or should not really be there. The most obvious treasures will be religious artefacts made of precious materials, but some bishops with temporal power also hoard coin, and when books are found they are also a treasure. Usually there will be treasure with one or two free invokes present. However, an ordinary church or monastery, rather than a prestigious abbey or cathedral, is not likely to have any treasure.

Support and Boons

In *Wolf's Head*, **support** measures how much the local people support your band in what you're doing.

At the start of a campaign, your support is zero. At the end of each session, your band of outlaws gains one support point when:

- You distribute treasure to improve the lot of the local poor. This involves having a treasure aspect (page 9). Your band can spend multiple free invokes on treasures to increase support.
- You correct a matter of injustice, such as freeing an innocent prisoner bound for execution.
- You publicly humiliate a hated noble.
- You help others who oppose corrupt authorities.
- You pull off a flashy caper.
- You expose corruption and cause the removal of a hated noble figure.
- You save commoners from death at the hands (direct or indirect) of the authorities.

You can gain support from any number of these conditions per session. For every three support points, the band gains a **boon**. They group of players should choose from the following list depending on what suits the narrative.

A Possible Ally: A major nonvillainous or ambivalent NPC feels respect for the actions of the PCs. If approached, they could be inspired to become a secret ally.

Suitable NPCs who could become allies are Maud Simnel of Romsey Abbey; Peter Vastal, chief of the Bishop of Winchester's guards; the merchant Emma Caradas; the outlaw Agnes Rose; and Baroness Margaret Longe.

This option can be chosen multiple times across different boons. This boon is an opportunity, not a guarantee—the new ally is not automatic, but the outlaws will know of their interest and potential sympathy.

Popular Support: The PCs are heroes to the commoners of the villages around the New Forest. They will always have a place to stay or even hide, and reasonable assistance that does not take the people away from their livelihoods. They also form a network of informants, giving the PCs information on possible opportunities and dangers.

In nearby towns such as Southampton and Winchester, not everyone will be so well disposed to the PCs, or even necessarily have heard of them, but *some* people will, and they can be found by subtly asking around.

Followers: One or several NPCs join the band. Choose from four Average (+1), two Fair (+2), or one Good (+3) nameless NPC.

The followers are not replaced should they die, but this option can be chosen multiple times across different boons.

The Old Gods: The outlaws get the chance to make arrangements with one of the old gods (page 14), perhaps gaining blessings and warnings.



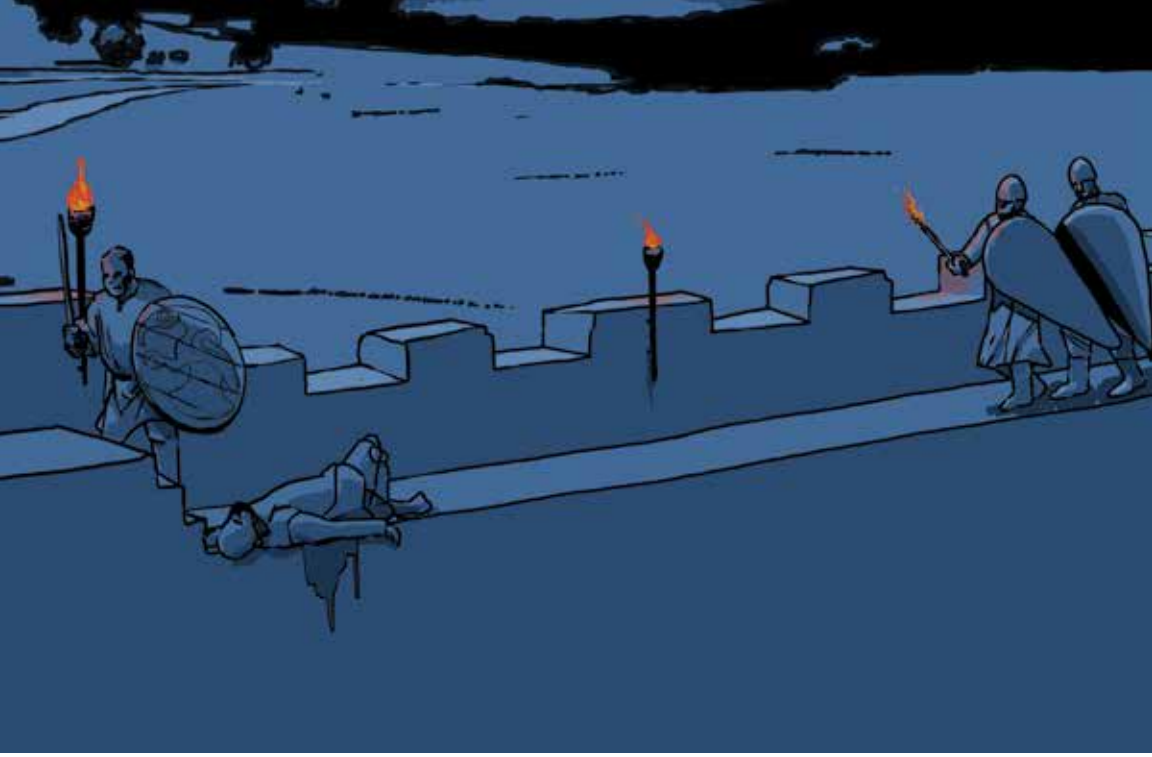
Threat

Your band is being hunted by the authorities and will more likely than not meet a tragic ending. **Threat** measures how much of an issue the authorities find your band, and how much effort they will spend to oust you.

At the start of a campaign, your threat is zero, but it will steadily increase. At the end of each session, you gain one threat point plus more as follows:

- You successfully oppose plans of the local nobility or clergy (1 threat) or king (2 threat).
- You steal from an important noble (1 threat), the Church (2 threat), or the king (2 threat).
- You kill a member of the clergy or a higher-ranking noble (3 threat).
- You kill a member of the royal family or a senior Church figure (5 threat).
- You behave in a cruel or callous way towards ordinary people, and in particular those in need (2 threat).
- Your names and faces become known to the local authorities (2 threat) or to the king or ministers (3 threat)—apply each increase only once during the campaign.

A single person cannot increase your threat multiple times; just apply the highest increase. For example, should the PCs kill a noble and proceed to steal his treasure, just increase threat by 3 points for the noble's murder; the added robbery doesn't make things any worse. Note, however, that stealing is in genre and helpful to gain treasure and increase support. Murder is not in genre—though if a noble faces the heroes in combat with a squad of soldiers intending violence, there may be no alternative to something fatal.



Every increment of three threat points introduces a new issue for the PCs, as follows:

- **3 Threat:** The king fills the vacant office of sheriff in the area, or appoints another high-rank noble. The new official is likely to take a personal interest in the outlaws. As a default, Sheriff Hubert de Montaigne (page 30) receives his appointment, to collect taxes and impose law and order. Alternatively, another noble known to the PCs, either a local or someone from their background, could be promoted into this role.
- **6 Threat:** A sorcerous threat comes onto the scene, either with Baron Baldwin of Corfe taking an interest in some of the more mystical elements of the New Forest, or with an established NPC enemy becoming more dangerous and deranged when they acquire sorcerous powers or the help of a malevolent old god.
- **9 Threat:** Betrayal. One of the PCs' allies either betrays them or is discovered, and has pressure brought to bear on the outlaws. If this ally came as part of a boon, the betrayal is not absolute—rather, the ally is in trouble and might be helped.
- **12 Threat:** The endgame. The king orders the death or capture of the outlaws at all costs, and throws considerable resources at the problem. This is likely to be tragic, but not hopeless. The authorities will begin by going after the PCs' suspected allies and anyone who shelters them or who the outlaws have aided, seeking to force them into the open. See “*All the King's Men (Final Adventure)*” (page 37) for details.

MAGIC AND MYSTICISM

The Old Gods

There are forgotten powers and spirits out there in the world. Very few have interacted directly with them, but belief in their influence is widespread. To the Church, most of these powers are officially demons, and indeed some are malicious or have turned malicious through the acts of their followers. But these powers are older than Christianity, and not quite faded.

In a few places, the powers still lurk, invisible and immaterial. Such places are sites of outstanding beauty and include forest glades, streams, and caves. A power has a name, sometimes matching that of a pagan god. Maybe they are one and the same. In their home, a power can do any of the following:

- **Speak to someone** who can sense the presence of the power. This means a character with the Spirit Speaker stunt (page 8) or an aspect tying them to the power.
- **Sense faraway places** and pass the information to the PCs. This is absolutely a GM plot device and not one to overuse.
- **Bless a character.** A blessing takes the form of an aspect with a free invoke. A blessing can be renewed if the power wills it when a character next visits the power's home. It can be compelled and invoked, but the GM should only compel it when doing so also serves the power's interests. Normally a blessing lasts until the end of the session.
- **Curse a character.** A curse takes the form of an immediate consequence of the lowest severity available. If a character has no consequences slots free, a curse could even kill them. This curse cannot be removed unless the power chooses to lift it. Fortunately, a power can only curse a given character once, though they can curse multiple people. If a power lifts a curse, they are free to impose another one in the future.

Example Blessing Aspects: THE GODDESS OF THE SPRING STRENGTHENS MY SWORD ARM; THE HUNTER ENSURES MY ARROWS FLY TRUE; THE LADY OF THE MISTS WILL HELP HIDE ME FROM ENEMIES; I KNOW THE HIDDEN PATHS OF THE FOREST

The aid of the old gods is seldom free. Usually, to gain a god's favour, one must make a gift or a sacrifice. Particularly nasty powers might even demand the gift of a human sacrifice. A worthy sacrifice will create an aspect temporarily tying the character who makes it to the power, meaning they can dimly hear the power's offers and demands until the end of the scene. Only the one who made the sacrifice will hear the old god; if several people seek favours, they must each make their own sacrifice, though they can do it together. In order to gain aid from a power, the character who made the sacrifice must succeed on a Rapport roll at an appropriate difficulty.



Examples of Worthy Sacrifices

- A human sacrifice to an evil god, fairly regarded as a demon by Christians who know the old stories
 - Treasure—sacrificing treasure to an old god spends one of its free invokes
 - A relic from a Christian abbey
 - A weapon which the sacrificer can reasonably claim has been used to slay enemies of the old god
-

For a success at a cost, a god might bind the character in an oath to perform a service. Alternatively, the character might offer a service instead of a sacrifice. Breaking the oath to the power brings down a curse on the oathbreaker.

The powers are not quite invulnerable. The destruction or defilement of their sacred place, the place of beauty where they dwell, will destroy the power. Those who live nearby will know that visiting such destruction is a bad idea. A power will certainly curse any who seek to destroy it, and some powers have guardians, whether people or animals, who will rise to defend it.

Mortal Sorcerers

A mortal sorcerer has entered into a pact with dark powers and is granted magical knowledge in return. A sorcerer could be a desperate commoner or a baron greedy for more power at any cost. A sorcerer must practice their arts in secret, for the crime of sorcery brings the death sentence. It is rare indeed for a noble to be accused of sorcery. When it comes to commoners, false accusations outnumber true ones many times over, though the witch hunts which will swamp Europe in a tide of fear and cruelty are still centuries ahead.

In exchange for their service to a demon and dark power, and probable eternal damnation, a sorcerer can do the following.

- **Divination:** The sorcerer will sometimes receive useful visions, possibly aided by a form of divination such as drawing cards or staring into a fire. As with spirits, a sorcerer's divination is entirely a plot device and should not be overused. That said, it is certainly appropriate for a sorcerer to have a vision warning them of an armed party coming to kill them.
- **Curses:** A sorcerer's curse is milder than the curse of an old god, and takes the form of a mental attack with Lore or Provoke, defended against with Will. If the defender takes a consequence, it will be something magical representing the nature of the curse. If the sorcerer is ever killed, they may roll once with a +4 bonus to curse their killer.
- **Geasa:** A sorcerer may bind someone to their service with a geas—an oath which carries with it a magical punishment if it is broken. The target of a geas must state their oath, but a statement could be coerced from them by threats or torment. If the victim of a geas breaks their oath, they are subject to one curse from the sorcerer, who rolls with a +2 bonus.

A player character cannot be a sorcerer. They are villains. They might be sympathetic villains who turned to sorcery out of desperation, but they have nonetheless performed some deeply unsavoury acts to gain their power.

OTHER MAGIC

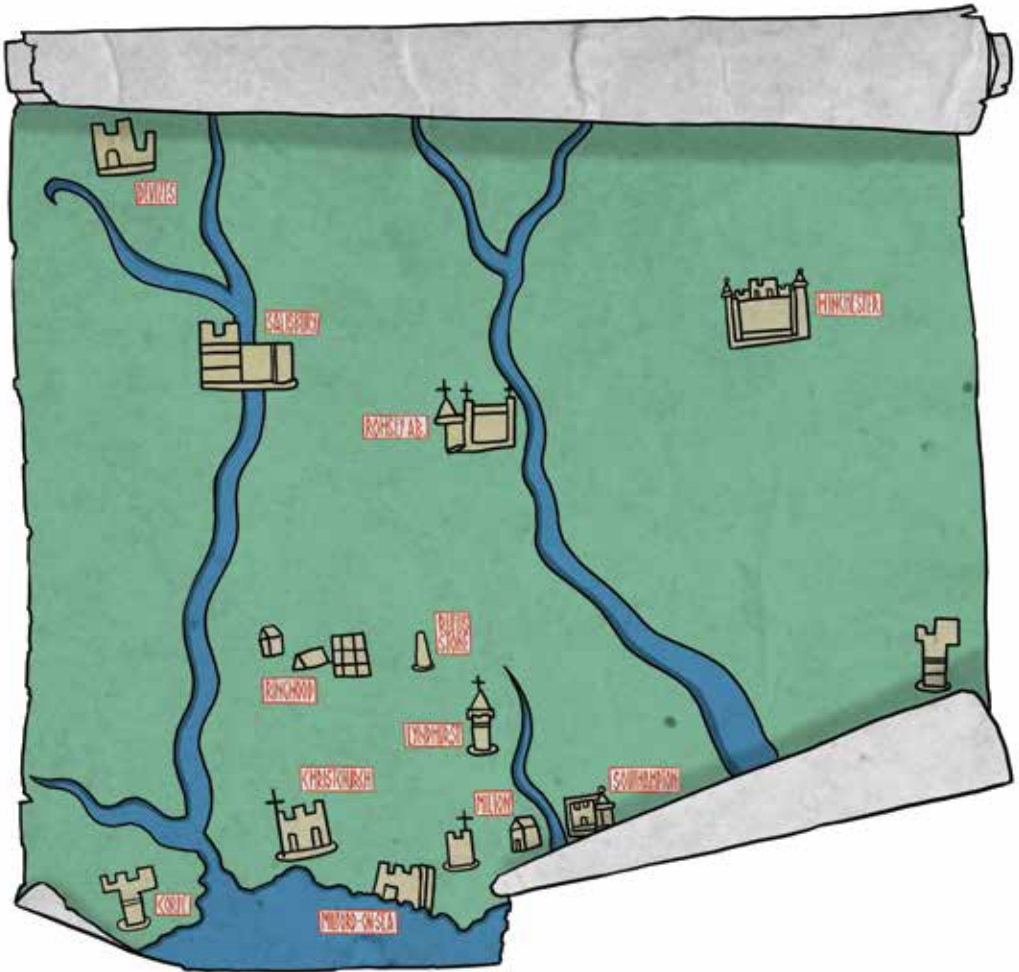
Sorcerers are NPCs, and the only “magical” powers a PC might possess are the stunts Devout Faith and Spirit Speaker. There is no other form of magic in *Wolf's Head*; the setting has mystical elements, but the game is not about magic.

If your group want to increase the amount of magic, such as by using an option from the *Fate System Toolkit*, you should naturally feel free, but know that this will change the nature of the game from a historical setting with some subtle magical elements to a magical setting. Of course, this might be exactly what you want to do.

THE SETTING

Wolf's Head is set the area around the New Forest in the year 1106, six years after Henry I became king. The king has just returned from Normandy, victorious in war, and seeks to reward those who fought with him. As well as the New Forest itself, the game is set around Winchester, base of the royal treasury, the mercantile port town of Southampton, and abbeys and castles in the general area.

This area is of direct interest to the king and his most important ministers. There are rich pickings for a band of outlaws, and opportunities greater than ordinary robbery. The people have suffered here, and it's going to get worse.



The New Forest

“William the Conqueror? Bill the bastard, I call him! And don’t listen to what the nobles tell you—the conquest wasn’t quick and clean and done at the Battle of Hastings. I’ve heard stories from the north of England which made me shiver. But the worst thing he did to the ordinary folk round here was making the New Forest. Before it became a big royal hunting ground, people lived there, not just in villages round the edges. But they were cleared out, villages burned, and those who wouldn’t move were killed.

“Those who didn’t up sticks and move when they were asked to...well, you can guess what happened to them. But I live in the forest now, free if you can call being a wolf’s head free. It’s better than serving them.”

— **Beatrice Ashe, former forester**

The New Forest is a royal hunting ground, meaning it may not be farmed, and the only ones who can hunt there are those with the permission of the king. It is not a place to live, or a source of food. It is a playground where nobles can kill animals for fun. The king employs foresters in the New Forest, who are tasked with making sure the forest is well stocked with game and keeping out poachers and other intruders.

But the forest is vast and wild, and someone who knows the land can stay out of the way of the authorities for years. In *Wolf’s Head*, the outlaw PCs make their home here. They might even gain at least the passive acceptance of the foresters—after all, armed and dangerous rebels are above their pay grade.

Six years ago, in the year 1100, King William Rufus, son of William the Conqueror, died in a hunting accident in the New Forest. His body was abandoned by his noble companions where it fell, as William Rufus’s younger brother, Henry, rushed to secure the royal treasury in Winchester, and then the crown for himself. It was only later that the king’s body was brought back, when a peasant stumbled across it.

The place William Rufus fell is marked by a stone. Local legend has it that the forest glade around the stone is a place of magical power, where the ghost of the dead king is chained. Stories say that the ghost is there because the king’s body was disrespected by his companions, because he was murdered, or because the old king is trapped on the earth by his wickedness in life.

The legends are half-true. Those coming here feel a sense of brooding and watchfulness, though this is not from any ghost, but from an old god who was here long before the king’s fateful final hunt. The ancient power’s name is forgotten, but some remember his title: the Stag.

MURDER OR ACCIDENT?

William Rufus was not a popular king. He quarrelled extensively with the Church. He heavily raised a special tax on commoners to pay for the First Crusade. His reign was marked by rebellion and an attempted invasion from Scotland, though William Rufus's army dealt with all military threats, and the king was popular with his soldiers.

The question must be raised as to whether William Rufus's death was genuinely an accident. Many had cause to seek his death, and his younger brother Henry benefited immensely. History records the name of the member of the hunting party who shot the king, a nobleman named Walter Tirel, who was noted for his skill with the bow. After the fateful hunt, Walter Tirel went into exile in France.

The truth of the matter in your game of *Wolf's Head*, if it is relevant, is up to you.

Villages

There are several villages around the edge of the New Forest. The most notable of these are Christchurch, Lymington, Lyndhurst, Milton, Milford, and Ringwood. Some of these villages are close to manors, where nobles, their servants, and a few household warriors live. There are no castles in the immediate surroundings of the New Forest.

Milton

Milton is a village on the south coast with an inn, the St. Julian, named after the patron saint of hospitality. There is a chapel devoted to Mary Magdalene, and a few farms with a weekly market. The lord's manor sits in a defensible position outside the village on top of an earthwork mound, but it's far from being a castle.

The lord of the manor is Geoffrey d'Ytane, who came into possession of Milton thanks to his murder of the old lord and forged documentation. The people of the village keep their heads down, hoping to avoid their brutal new lord's wrath. Geoffrey has around two dozen "knights" in his employ who are in reality mere thugs. They live in Milton, in some cases displacing other families, and Sir Geoffrey is always eager for more recruits, whether local or from further afield.

MANORS

A lord's manor is attached to farmed land and perhaps controls a nearby village. A typical manor is mainly a single-storey building built around a long great hall with doors at each end. Kitchens and storage areas are attached. There may also be a small chapel on the grounds. The lord and his family live in the solarium, which is a structure two or three storeys high adjoining the great hall from the side.

Lyndhurst

Lyndhurst was once one of the major villages in the area, almost a town, with the right to hold a weekly market. Like other villages in the area, it lost most of its lands to the creation of the New Forest. The local baron of Lyndhurst was compensated for any loss of land, gaining the prestigious title Warden of the Forest. But even that has been withdrawn from Lyndhurst's current ruler, the baroness Margaret Longe. The baroness is a childless widow, and although she inherited the much-reduced lands around Lyndhurst, she has no formal title or right to be called Warden.

Ringwood

When William the Conqueror had the New Forest created, most of the land in the village of Ringwood was ceded to the forest, and most of its people were forced to move elsewhere.

The manor of Ringwood, once the property of a Saxon earl, became a royal hunting lodge, the base for royal hunts setting off into the forest.

Towns

Southampton

Southampton is a major port, and those crossing the sea between Normandy and the south coast of England will come here. There is a French quarter in Southampton dating from before the Norman conquest, but a few residents come from even further afield.

Not only people and armies come to Southampton. There is steady trade in goods between England and continental Europe, and Southampton is a centre of distribution for such goods going to sell elsewhere in England.

The main symbol of royal authority in Southampton is the castle, built not long after Norman rule began, in the west part of the city, overlooking the docks and surrounded by the houses of the richest merchants. Despite the presence of the castle, these merchants are the most important and powerful people in the city.

Winchester

The town of Winchester is a centre of power, both royal and religious. It is the second most important city in the country, after London. Although Norman England has no capital, Winchester is a place of importance and has been a centre of royal authority since the time of Alfred the Great.

Norman power and prestige are demonstrated in Winchester in the form of the cathedral, the largest building in Europe. There is tension between the king and the Church over who gets to appoint bishops, but when it comes to the appointment of the Bishop of Winchester, the king currently has the upper hand.

The centre of royal power, however, is Winchester Castle, where the royal treasury and, even more importantly, the financial records of the kingdom are kept. Naturally, all these are securely guarded. The king's soldiers at the castle have a rivalry with the guards who serve the bishop, as

Winchester Castle is a royal possession, too important to fall under the control of a local baron.

When the royal court is not in residence in Winchester, the lord of the castle is the local sheriff, who is in charge of keeping the peace and collecting taxes in the area. For several years, the office has been vacant, but a new appointment, Hubert de Montaigne, is keen to make his mark.

Winchester has England's largest Jewish population, who settled in the city by invitation of William the Conqueror. The Jewish citizens of England, and everything they own, are regarded as the king's "property," outside the authority of any other nobles. Those of the Jewish faith are permitted to practise money-lending, which is forbidden to Christians. These moneylending services are used by England's high-ranking nobles, the king, and even the Church.

At this time, Jewish people are not yet subject to the violent hatreds which will sweep medieval England from the year 1144 onwards, but people still fear them as being "different."

Castles

Corfe Castle

Corfe Castle occupies a commanding position on a hilltop. The structure dates from just before the Norman Conquest, but a stone keep was completed on the order of King Henry I just last year. Though it's a royal castle, Corfe Castle is currently under the control of Baron Baldwin. Although certainly a prominent noble, he is a loner with no known family and a rumoured practitioner of sorcery. But none have any doubts as to his right to occupy the castle.

Devizes Castle

Devizes Castle was built by the previous bishop of Salisbury, and is the property of the new bishop, Roger le Poer. Le Poer is better known as a talented businessman than as a pious religious leader, and has not yet been consecrated in his position owing to a falling-out with Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The castle dungeons have a new prominent prisoner, Robert Curthose, the eldest son of William the Conqueror and the former Duke of Normandy. Robert strove with his younger brother Henry I for the English crown, and was ousted as duke earlier this year when the king led an invasion of Normandy. He is kept in Devizes Castle so as to be a safe distance from the usual centres of royal power and possible court sympathisers.



Abbeys

Hyde Abbey

Hyde Abbey is just outside the walls of Winchester. The current site is new, moved on the order of King Henry I. The new abbey has not yet been consecrated, though some monks are already in residence. When it is consecrated, there are plans to move the bodies of King Alfred the Great, along with his wife and son, and inter them before the altar.

Abbot Godric has hopes that this interment will add to the new abbey's prestige and make it a pilgrimage site. However, the royal authorities and the Bishop of Winchester fear that any ceremony around the body of the most famous Saxon king will lead to a wave of protest and ill feeling against Norman rule. Thus, the plans to consecrate the abbey keep being put off with increasingly farfetched excuses.

Romsey Abbey

Romsey Abbey is a convent hosting a community of nuns. It also has prestige as both a centre of learning and a place of healing. Several of the nuns are skilled in medicine and herb lore, and its herb garden contains several plants not found elsewhere in the area. The nuns keep careful watch over the herb garden; the line between a rare plant being used as medicine and as poison can be surprisingly thin.

The Abbess of Romsey Abbey was a commoner before she became a nun. She lacks connections among the nobility, and some of the local nobles, even senior officials in the Church, do not take her seriously despite her status.

Thus the prestige of Romsey Abbey is fading, and it sometimes goes short on funds. The nuns work hard in the orchards and fields to support the abbey, though most of them would sooner be cloistered scholars. The abbess has been heard praying for a rich patient who could be healed at the abbey and would reward it with generous donations.



People

William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester

William Giffard is one of the most powerful men in England, and he takes no nonsense nor lets anyone stand in his way. He was the lord chancellor to the king, in charge of the royal coffers, and his position as bishop was a reward for his service. He is clever in politics, subtle when he needs to be, ruthless when he has to be.

The bishop is not an evil man as such, but he does not care about the suffering of ordinary people, and will give brutal orders for the greater good. Despite being a member of the clergy, he has accumulated a good deal of personal wealth.

Sir Peter Vastal

Sir Peter Vastal is honest, honourable, and stubborn. He is not a deep thinker, but is loyal to his lord, the Bishop of Winchester, and capable in matters of the bishop's security or the security of Winchester Castle.

THE BISHOP'S GUARDS

The bishop's guards are knights, elite warriors who are better trained and armed than a common soldier. Although they form a mob, the guards are still dangerous adversaries as a group.

Maud Simnel, Abbess of Romsey

The Abbess of Romsey is one of the most important people in the area. However, her background as a commoner means some of the nobility don't take her as seriously as they should. This may mean she's more sympathetic than she should be to the PC outlaws, who seem to do good despite their legal status. She also cannot hide her dislike of the Bishop of Winchester, who she sees as worldly and venal.

Abbess Maud has found something of a retreat from troublesome politics in books. She is particularly interested in history and poetry, though she is also sharp when it comes to matters of law.

William Giffard

ASPECTS

FORMER LORD CHANCELLOR;
EAR OF THE KING; BISHOP OF
WINCHESTER; GREAT PERSONAL
WEALTH; RUTHLESS FOR THE
GREATER GOOD

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Contacts, Will
Great (+4): Lore, Provoke, Rapport
Good (+3): Athletics, Deceive,
Investigate, Notice
Fair (+2): Crafts, Empathy, Fight,
Ride

STUNTS

Escape Plan: When you would be
taken out, you can spend a fate
point to immediately concede
instead.

Guards, Guards!: Once per session,
you can call reinforcements—Sir
Peter Vastal and four elite guards.

STRESS

Physical **1 2**
Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Mild Mental (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

Sir Peter Vastal

ASPECTS

LOYAL CAPTAIN OF THE BISHOP'S
GUARDS; I ALWAYS CATCH
INTRUDERS; HONEST AND
HONOURABLE; NOT A DEEP THINKER

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Athletics
Great (+4): Fight, Ride
Good (+3): Physique, Notice, Will

STUNTS

Knight in Shining Armour: Peter's
armour gives him a mild physical
consequence slot, included below.

Bodyguard: If another character in
his zone is attacked, Peter can spend
a fate point to redirect the attack
toward himself.

Lead the Pursuit: In a chase, all of
Peter's followers may use his Athletics
or Ride roll if he is with them.

Dangerous Blade: When he succeeds
on an attack with his sword, Peter
does an extra 2 shifts of harm.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3 4**
Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Mild Physical (2):
Mild Physical (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

The Bishop's Guards

ASPECTS

KNIGHTS IN THE SERVICE OF THE BISHOP; BETTER TRAINED AND ARMED THAN
ORDINARY SOLDIERS

SKILLS

Good (+3): Fight **Average (+1):** Notice

STUNTS

Deadly Weapons: When they succeed on an attack, the bishop's guards do an
extra shift of harm.

STRESS **1 2**

Baroness Margaret Longe, Lady of Lyndhurst

Margaret Longe's husband died in the recent war in Normandy, leaving his wife in control of his property. She has no children, and is enjoying the exercise of independent power and the business of being a ruler.

The baroness's short-term goal is to regain one title held by her husband, which she has not been granted, namely Warden of the New Forest. She has effective command of the foresters, but no formal authority, and has been challenged by the local nobility. Margaret does not mind getting her hands dirty to get her way, and is even willing to work with outlaws if it helps her aims. That said, actually capturing a prominent band of outlaws would do wonders for Margaret's standing.

In the long term, the baroness desires more power and being appointed as a senior counsellor of the king, an unusual position for a woman who is not one of the royal family. But however it might help her, Margaret will not marry again, and so put her fortunes under the legal control of another.

MARGARET'S SERVANTS

Margaret's servants, women and men alike, are as much guards as anything else, though they seem and act more like domestic help. They carry small concealed weapons for emergencies.

Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane, Lord of Milton

Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane is a dangerous warrior, a brutal thug, and a man without scruples. His vicious reputation means he is not welcomed by the more polite nobles, but the Bishop of Winchester makes use of him as he might a vicious dog in a hunt, and rewards Sir Geoffrey well for his services.

When the Lord of Milton died, passing all of his property to his oldest son, it was straightforward enough for Geoffrey to kill the older son and frame the younger for his murder. Then, thanks to a document provided by the Bishop of Winchester, Geoffrey d'Ytane became Lord of Milton. It was a fitting payment for Sir Geoffrey's unique services.

Big Walt

Big Walt is Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane's second-in-command. Despite having such an exalted role, he is not even a minor noble. He's a commoner, but does not act like it. Perhaps because of his elevation, Big Walt seems to feel actual loyalty towards his brutish lord; it will take a huge reward to make Big Walt betray him.

That said, should anything happen to Geoffrey d'Ytane, Big Walt is confident he could become the trusted man of another mercenary captain or brutish baron. Such job opportunities are easy to come by for one of his talents.

SIR GEOFFREY'S MEN

Sir Geoffrey's men are thugs, pure and simple. Anything they lack in skill they make up for in viciousness and willingness to get their hands very dirty indeed. Naturally, they form mobs.

Maud Simnel

ASPECTS

ABBESS OF ROMSEY; ONCE A PEASANT; BOOKWORM; DISLIKES THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

SKILLS

Great (+4): Lore

Good (+3): Empathy, Will

Fair (+2): Contacts, Investigate, Rapport

STUNTS

Legal Expertise: Maud can use Lore to make a social attack when arguing a legal case or when her knowledge of the law is otherwise relevant.

STRESS

Physical **1** **2**

Mental **1** **2** **3** **4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Margaret's Servants

ASPECTS

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

SKILLS

Fair (+2): Deceive

Average (+1): Fight, Notice

STRESS **1**

Baroness

Margaret Longe

ASPECTS

BARONESS OF LYNDHURST; GREEDY FOR MORE POWER; I WILL NOT MARRY AGAIN

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6): Rapport

Superb (+5): Notice, Will

Great (+4): Empathy, Investigate, Provoke

Good (+3): Contacts, Deceive, Lore, Ride

STUNTS

Political Animal: In a political environment or argument, Margaret may use Rapport to make mental attacks.

A Harmless Widow: It is difficult even for the most hardened of brutes to bring themselves to harm Margaret. She can use Rapport to defend against physical attacks.

Armed Servants: Margaret is not a military leader, but she is never far from a few followers who will jump to her defence. She rewards those who serve her well, and is careful of possible danger. Once per session, Margaret may call up eight of her servants for aid if she is in peril.

STRESS

Physical **1** **2**

Mental **1** **2** **3** **4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Mild Mental (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane

ASPECTS

THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER'S ATTACK DOG; I'LL KILL IN BOTH HOT BLOOD AND COLD; FEARSOME REPUTATION; UNWELCOME IN POLITE SOCIETY

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Deceive, Provoke
Great (+4): Athletics, Fight, Stealth
Good (+3): Physique, Notice, Shoot, Will
Fair (+2): Investigate, Lore, Ride

STUNTS

Bloody Wound: When Geoffrey succeeds on an attack, he can spend a fate point to force the defender to take a consequence or increase the severity of an existing consequence by one step.

Terrifying Fighter: Once per scene, Geoffrey can make a physical and mental attack with Provoke, defended against with Will.

You Can't Touch Me: Until Geoffrey takes physical harm during the scene, he can use Provoke to defend.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3 4**
Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

Big Walt

ASPECTS

UNGENTLE GIANT; COMMON BIRTH, KNIGHTLY STATION; TRUSTED MAN OF GEOFFREY D'YTANE

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Physique
Great (+4): Fight, Provoke
Good (+3): Athletics, Shoot, Will

STUNTS

Hard to Hurt: You can use Physique to defend against physical attacks.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3 4**
Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Mild Physical (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

Sir Geoffrey's Men

ASPECTS

MORE THUGS THAN SOLDIERS; DIRTY WORK FOR VICIOUS MEN

SKILLS

Fair (+2): Fight
Average (+1): Notice

STRESS **1**

Emma Caradas

Emma is a merchant based in Southampton who trades in imported luxuries from continental Europe. Growing up, she had not intended to be a businesswoman, but rather had intended to enter Romsey Abbey as a nun. But Emma's fortunes changed when her father died after a long illness, and her rash older brother, Thomas, was executed for poaching when he was caught taking a shortcut across the New Forest.

Now Emma has control of the family business and must do well enough to look after her younger siblings. She is sharp and notices things, both her environment and the reactions of people around her. Emma is also serious-minded, sensible, and learned; though she will never admit it, the business is doing far better with her at its head than it ever did under her father, let alone Thomas.

Emma's main issue is that she has trouble trusting the competence of others, especially her siblings, and therefore finds herself leading most of the business expeditions herself.



Emma Caradas

ASPECTS

SUCCESSFUL MERCHANT; TROUBLE TRUSTING THE COMPETENCE OF OTHERS; FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Notice

Great (+4): Empathy, Will

Good (+3): Contacts, Investigate, Ride

Fair (+2): Crafts, Fight, Lore, Rapport

STUNTS

Eye for Detail: Once per scene on her turn, without spending an action, Emma can create an advantage with Notice, discovering a small detail she might be able to make use of.

Sales Patter: Emma gains +2 to Rapport when haggling or convincing someone to buy or sell something.

STRESS

Physical **1 2**

Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Agnes Rose

Agnes Rose leads a band of outlaws in the New Forest. She was once a servant in the household of Baron Baldwin of Corfe, and fled into the forest after trying to kill him. Her only regret is that she did not succeed. Agnes has learned about the baron's secret altar and demonic worship, but so far has told nobody.

The former servant now leads a score of people, all hiding from the authorities, preying on merchants and passing traffic. Some of Agnes's followers have committed horrible crimes in their past; Agnes does not ask questions. The outlaws are not heroes. They are predators on rich and poor alike, killing and stealing to survive. They have no scruples. Agnes herself is bitter and cynical, and only leads her band because a group has better opportunities than individuals. It's a sort of loyalty. Her followers, half seriously and half mockingly, call her the queen of the forest.

Agnes is not an immediate ally of the PCs, and she is just as likely to sell them out as she is to work with them. She might be persuaded to cooperate against a common enemy, but this will be a temporary arrangement. After all, there is only room for one queen of the forest.

Agnes Rose

ASPECTS

OUTLAW LEADER; IDEALS ARE FOR THE FOOLISH;
THERE ARE PREDATORS AND PREY, NOTHING ELSE;
MY GROUP IS STRONGER TOGETHER THAN AS
INDIVIDUALS; FEAR OF BARON BALDWIN OF CORFE

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Shoot
Great (+4): Notice, Stealth
Good (+3): Athletics, Fight, Provoke

STUNTS

Hail of Arrows: Once per scene, Agnes can send a hail of arrows, attacking everyone in a zone.
Shoot to Kill: When Agnes attacks with Shoot and has an aspect representing taking aim or setting an ambush, she does two extra shifts of harm.
Attack Position: Agnes can create an advantage with Stealth to set an ambush for herself and any followers. Anyone who invokes this aspect gets +3 rather than +2.

STRESS

Physical **1****2** Mental **1****2**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):



Sheriff Hubert de Montaigne

Hubert de Montaigne is an ambitious young noble, newly appointed to the position of sheriff. The position of regional sheriff has been vacant for several years, since the death of King William Rufus.

The last sheriff and various temporary officials assigned to collect taxes have been corrupt, but the new sheriff is known for his absolute hatred of corruption and his loyalty to King Henry, which is one reason for his appointment. He is absolutely opposed to anyone he sees as enemies to the king, whether rebellious nobles, outlaws, or common criminals. The sheriff will not compromise, take bribes, or make alliances of convenience.

Hubert de Montaigne is absolute when it comes to collecting money or goods owed. Should he not receive what is due, he will deal out harsh and disproportionate punishments, starting with maimings and ending with decimation of a village's population. Fear is a tool for prompt and accurate payment. At least the sheriff won't burn whole villages for fear of affecting tax revenue, and does not quietly increase taxes in order to enrich himself.

He does not see himself as a zealot, but rather as someone who is absolutely dedicated to fairness and the cause of peace, in the name of the king. Even small deviations cannot be tolerated when it comes to money or disloyalty, for that is where the rot begins.

Baron Baldwin of Corfe

Baron Baldwin is the ruler of Corfe Castle, and nobody questions his right to be there, even though the castle is a royal possession and the baron appears to have no noble relatives. There is far more to the baron than it seems. He is a sorcerer sworn to serve a demonic old god known simply as the Cunning One. The baron does not know the being's name. Indeed, one thing he seeks is to learn it, for then he might have some power over the Cunning One.

Corfe Castle, and the subtle clouding of mortal minds which let Baldwin declare himself a baron, were both a gift of the Cunning One and a demonstration of its power. In return for this gift, Baron Baldwin worships the Cunning One in secret, and has promised to bring more people into the Cunning One's service—and to sacrifice someone to the Cunning One each month. It is easy enough for Baron Baldwin to find criminals to execute, and nobody cares if the execution is ritualistic and in secret.

What the baron does not know is that the Cunning One's gift taxed the ancient and tired being to its limits. It is only now beginning to recover with the diet of sacrifices. The Cunning One wants more influence and more power, and Baron Baldwin will be its tool. The being is not too different from an ambitious human noble in some ways.

Sheriff Hubert de Montaigne

ASPECTS

ZEALOUS LOYALTY TO THE KING;
NOT A PENNY MORE, NOT A PENNY
LESS; NO COMPROMISE WITH
CRIMINALS; ATROCITIES IN THE
NAME OF FAIRNESS AND PEACE

SKILLS

Fantastic (+6): Provoke
Superb (+5): Investigate, Will
Great (+4): Contacts, Lore, Notice
Good (+3): Athletics, Fight, Physique,
Ride

STUNTS

Absolute Conviction: Like those pro-
tected by their faith, Sheriff Hubert
cannot be harmed by the curses of
old gods or sorcerers.

You Dare Not Harm Me: Until the
first time he takes harm in a con-
flict, Hubert can use Will to defend
against physical attacks.

You Dare Not Lie to Me: Anyone
who tells a lie to Hubert must suc-
ceed on a Deceive roll opposed by
Hubert's Provoke to avoid stam-
mering, sweating, or giving other
obvious signs.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3**
Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Mild Mental (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):

Baron Baldwin of Corfe

ASPECTS

BARON OF CORFE CASTLE;
MYSTERIOUS PAST; SECRET
SORCERER SERVANT OF A DEMON
GOD; DARK GIFTS

SKILLS

Superb (+5): Lore
Great (+4): Investigate, Provoke
Good (+3): Notice, Physique, Will
Fair (+2): Athletics, Fight, Ride

STUNTS

Sorcerous: Baron Baldwin is a sor-
cerer, with the powers described in
“*Mortal Sorcerers*” (page 16).

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3 4**
Mental **1 2 3 4**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):



ADVENTURES

Broadly, adventures in *Wolf's Head* come in the form of opportunities and dangers. An opportunity is a chance for the outlaws to earn treasure and do good deeds, thumbing their noses at the forces opposing them. A danger is an adventure which comes to the outlaws, presenting a problem they have to deal with.

A *Wolf's Head* campaign mixes opportunities and dangers. GMs, you'll want to present opportunities or a choice of opportunities for the heroes to pursue. A danger comes along soon after an issue arises from increasing threat, and introduces the situation given by the threat. An individual adventure can also mix an opportunity and a danger.

The Bishop's Treasure

This is a ready-to-play scenario for *Wolf's Head*. It can be used as a stand-alone game or as part of a campaign. It also works as an introduction for a campaign, with sufficiently many potential loose ends to keep your players interested.

Opening Scene

The outlaws have a tip-off...a lightly protected cargo of wine, imported from Southampton, bound for Baron Baldwin at Corfe Castle. They know the route, the northern road through the forest, and the time. They have had time to prepare an ambush.

Each player character may describe their preparations and roll to create an advantage.

But what comes through first is not the merchant's wagon, but rather a boy of around thirteen carrying a bundle wrapped in cloth, running away on foot from a group of six mounted warriors. The boy turns and flees to the south. Two of the knights keep with the horses; the other four pursue. The warriors have plain shields and serve Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane (page 25); any character familiar with him can recognise them with a roll against Average (+1) difficulty.

The leader of the pursuing gang is Big Walt (page 25); the others are ordinary thugs serving Sir Geoffrey. The PCs have the choice of doing something or continuing their planned robbery. Relevant aspects involving helping others or having Sir Geoffrey as an enemy may compel them into action.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Geoffrey d'Ytane, still new in his control of Milton, did a search of properties for tax purposes. His men found one woman, Avice Martel, with an antique Roman sword, similar to a sword he once took on the bishop's orders. D'Ytane decided he needed to take the sword, and the woman to William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester—Giffard had previously paid well for a job capturing a similar sword.

But while d'Ytane made preparations, the man sent his son to flee with the sword, and made a stand against d'Ytane's men. They captured him and took him to the bishop's palace in Winchester, while Big Walt took some men in pursuit of the boy with the sword.

If the PCs interfere, one warrior will continue chasing the boy, and the other four, along with Big Walt, will turn to fight the PCs. The PCs have three rounds to rescue the boy before the warrior catches up with him.

The Boy and the Wine Merchant

The boy is Nicholas Martel, from Milton, to the south of the forest. The package he carries in the bundle is a sword, an ancient Roman gladius from the time of the conquest of Britain. If players are using sample PCs (page 39), the sword is twin to the one Beatrice Ashe's father once had. On the hilt is scratched a single word: *Roquetius*.

The sword was inherited by Nicholas Martel's mother, a woman who knows lots of old stories. She told Nicholas to take the sword to the stream by the king's stone, and throw it in. The stone is just north of the road, presumably the Rufus Stone, said to be haunted or cursed.

Nicholas, once the sword is safe, is determined to rescue his mother from the Bishop of Winchester. With luck, the PCs will be heroic enough to get involved here—otherwise, poor Nicholas is doomed.

Naturally the wine merchant is due soon, and will come through while the PCs are still “tidying up” from the last encounter. The merchant is William Caradas, cousin and employee of the merchant Emma Caradas, who is based in Southampton (page 20).

If he suspects trouble, William will turn back. He's not stupid. He can give information about some of the movements nearby but isn't really relevant to the adventure, apart from providing a possible extra prize for the outlaws.

ROQUETIUS

If they come in contact with the sword, the characters can gain information with Lore roll against a Good (+3) difficulty—two pieces on a success with style. Everyone may roll.

- Roquetius was a Celtic hunter god who sometimes took human prey. He was worshipped in the New Forest.
- The Romans stamped out the cult of Roquetius.
- The followers of Roquetius took their sacrifices to the god, stripped them, and let them run to be hunted down.
- In one myth, Roquetius himself was killed by two Roman soldiers. Their swords still have power over the god when both are used at once.
- His shrine was in Colpix Cave, an ancient barrow on Beaulieu Heath.

Any success will also tell the rolling character that more information is available in Romsey Abbey (page 34).

William Caradas

ASPECTS

TRAVELLING
WINE SELLER; NO
UNNECESSARY RISKS

SKILLS

Good (+3): Rapport
Average (+1): Notice

STRESS 1

Guards

ASPECTS

HIRED GUARDS

SKILLS

Fair (+2): Fight

STRESS 1



Investigations

There are several places the PCs might go to next, pursuing the leads they have from the boy and the sword.

THE RUFUS STONE

The Rufus Stone marks the place where King William Rufus was shot “by accident” on a hunt. It is said to be haunted. This isn’t quite true, but there is an ancient spirit present, and those who come to the stone report a feeling of brooding watchfulness. The boy, Nicholas Martel, is to give the sword to the spirit and ask for aid.

A character who succeeds at a Good (+3) Lore roll will know that the spirit is an old power sometimes called the Stag, who will respond to a gift of a libation of wine poured on the ground near the stone. An old god will not normally respond to such a small sacrifice, but the Stag recognises Nicholas Martel, as it knows his father and is favourably inclined.

The old god is an enemy of Roquetius and craves an end to the hunting of deer in the forest. A character who succeeds at a Good (+3) Rapport roll after stating aims which align with the power’s wishes, or who agrees to take an oath, can gain the power’s blessing.

Gifts the power can give include hiding the boy from sight while he stays at the stone, a blessing such as *Speed of the Stag*, or a vision giving some of the information on the god Roquetius (page 33) or even on the Bishop of Winchester, who holds another sword, twin to the one held by Nicholas Martel.

ROMSEY ABBEY

Romsey Abbey is a convent, led by an abbess, Maud Simnel, one of the most important women in the area (page 23). Her common background may mean the abbess is more sympathetic than she might otherwise be to the PCs. Access to the convent library means talking to the abbess; if the PCs do not present a good honest reason, they may need to succeed at a Fair (+2) Rapport or similar skill roll.

In the library, give one piece of information about Roquetius for free. Give an extra piece for a Fair (+2) Lore roll, or two on a success with style.

The abbess also knows that the Bishop of Winchester is very interested in the Roquetius myth, but won’t think to mention it if the PCs won’t tell her what they are doing and make a favourable impression.

Winchester

The trail leads to Winchester, specifically to the bishop's palace. There are several potential clues which lead here or to the bishop:

- Nicholas Martel knows that his mother was to be taken to the Bishop of Winchester when she was captured.
- The Abbess of Romsey knows of the bishop's interest in the Roquetius story.
- Geoffrey d'Ytane's men will reveal they are working for the Bishop of Winchester if questioned.
- The spirit at the Rufus Stone could reveal that the Bishop of Winchester has a role in the proceedings.

There are two main things of interest in the bishop's palace: a sword of Roquetius, which stands in the bishop's treasury, and the secure rooms beneath the palace, one of which holds Avice Martel as prisoner.

WHERE DID THE SECOND SWORD COME FROM?

The Bishop of Winchester, having interest in the legend, got hold of one of the swords of Roquetius long before his recent acquisition. If players are using sample PCs (page 39), Beatrice Ashe's backstory connects to the sword held by the Bishop of Winchester.

Getting what is needed from the palace is a Good (+3) challenge which requires:

- Getting into the palace
- Sneaking around the palace without being noticed
- Breaking into the secure rooms
- Accessing the treasure room, which contains much gold and coin, along with precious bejewelled church artefacts and the two swords
- Getting out (increase the difficulty to Superb (+5) if carrying multiple treasures)

Three or more failures will bring guards, in the form of Sir Peter Vastal and six of the bishop's guards (page 23). Even a success will bring pursuit, though delayed. The PCs will also learn that Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane is staying as a guest in the palace. Eight of Geoffrey's men are with him.

Despite appearances, the bishop's interest in the swords and Roquetius is not purely villainous, though the same cannot be said of his methods. The bishop doesn't want to seek occult power. He wants to keep the swords which could awaken Roquetius safe in his hands rather than let them fall into the hands of a would-be sorcerer. He'll happily tell the PCs this if confronted.

Beaulieu Heath

Although the bishop isn't interested in gaining power from Roquetius, one could be... Sir Geoffrey d'Ytane. If Baron Baldwin of Corfe has been in a previous scenario, he also knows of the swords, and is interested in getting hold of them and awakening Roquetius. A showdown on Beaulieu Heath might lie in the future.

Roquetius's sacred place on Beaulieu Heath is a hidden barrow known as Colpix Cave, where an ancient king who once channelled the god's power rests with the treasures given to him. He is an old god with a taste for human sacrifice. The god can be roused by placing the swords amongst the other treasure in the barrow, or by taking treasure from the barrow. In the latter case, Roquetius's attention will be in the form of a curse! In the former case, he might bless the one who gives him the swords, or even grant them sorcerous power.

Further Adventure Seeds

The Merchant's Offer

Emma Caradas, the merchant, has been suffering from outlaw attacks, not just stealing but murdering her guards and driver. The attacks aren't coming from the PCs, but from another group—those led by Agnes Rose. Emma sends a cart along a route the PCs are known to watch, but the cart contains no cargo to steal. Emma herself is the driver, and she intends to gain the PCs' attention and ask for their help. She does not think the PCs are behind the attacks, from what she knows of their reputation.

Perhaps negotiation is the key, and Emma Rose and the PCs can come to some sort of arrangement. Or perhaps Agnes Rose will decide the New Forest is not big enough for two outlaw bands.

The Accused

An ally of the PCs stands accused of a crime, and they are being held prisoner in Winchester Castle, awaiting execution. The execution is to be a major public show, the official reason being to discourage similar offenders. The real reason is to set a trap for the outlaws. Of course they are going to mount a rescue attempt, and there are forces waiting for them.

The Hunt

An important dignitary from France is visiting the area, and he intends to go on a hunt. He will be relatively unprotected, and if the PCs dare, they should be able to raise considerable ransom money. A complication is that Agnes Rose has a grudge against that dignitary, having known him when she was a servant in Corfe Castle. She does not intend anything as elegant as a ransom—she intends to kill him. Maybe he deserves it. Maybe he is tied up with sorcery. Or maybe he is purely an innocent party who deserves better.

All the King's Men (Final Adventure)

When the outlaws' threat reaches 12, the next adventure is the last of the campaign. The authorities muster all forces available to suppress the outlaws. PCs can draw upon their support to attempt to escape or still attain their goals, and the more support they have accumulated, the more benefits they gain at this point. Other enemies the heroes have made are also going all out to eliminate them, and the PCs have the chance to face down any nemeses they have accumulated over the campaign.

Begin the adventure as a normal one, mixing opportunity and danger, with the following extra rules:

- The GM can spend threat points as if they were fate points.
- If a PC is taken out, and it is plausible in the conflict, they die or are otherwise removed from play with no hope of redemption.
- The GM can spend two threat points to bring a major NPC enemy into a scene, backed up by an overwhelming number of nameless NPCs. This is a chance for the GM to personalise things, and force the PCs to flee or do something clever, more than an opportunity to get at an enemy, though if they find a clever way to turn things around, that's a bonus.

As a counterpoint to all this doom and gloom, the players can spend their support points as follows:

- Any player can spend support points as if they were fate points, but only to invoke their goal aspect.
- Each player can spend two support points to frame a single scene related to their goal, their escape and survival, aiding a friend or group of friends, or a meeting with a nemesis. This only costs one support point if the PC will be doomed at the end of the scene, regardless of whether they accomplish their goal, aid friends, or defeat a nemesis. (This doesn't include the escape-and-survival option.) A character who escapes and survives leaves the scene and no longer takes part in play. The GM can spend a threat point to change this scene into a challenge or conflict that determines the success or failure of the PC. The PC can be involved by themselves, or can spend another support point to have another willing PC present.
- The player of a dead character or a character who escaped and survived can spend a support point to narrate a scene in which other characters carry on with their legacy. This happens in addition to the above scene, and is purely narrative. If a PC dies or is otherwise removed from play before they narrate a scene, they may narrate two scenes in this way; otherwise, a player can just do this once.



Once every player who wants to narrate a scene has done so, and the GM has spent all of their threat points, it's time to bring the campaign to a close. The PCs can spend any remaining support points as follows, moving around the table to give everyone a chance, beginning with the players of dead characters:

- Spend one support point to describe one way the PCs have made a positive difference locally, or spend two points to describe how they have made a difference nationally.
- Spend one support point to describe a new element which shakes up the authorities locally, or two points for a new element which shakes them up nationally. This new element may or may not be directly tied into the PCs, but there should at least be a thematic connection.

These elements can come into play in a future game of *Wolf's Head*.



SAMPLE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The characters in this chapter are an example of an outlaw band. They have common enemies in the form of Geoffrey d'Ytane and the Bishop of Winchester. Ironically, it was these enemies who brought them together, when a force of Geoffrey d'Ytane's men captured them one by one on the orders of the Bishop of Winchester who was "sweeping up loose ends."

They formed a plan together and escaped before they were brought before the bishop. They also found, despite coming from different walks of life, that they had much in common.

The band has the aspect **SHARED ENEMIES AND SHARED IDEALS**.

Beatrice Ashe

You grew up in the forest. Your mother died when you were very young, and you were your father's only child. He taught you how to fight and shoot, how to survive in the forest, how to hunt and stay hidden. He also told you stories, about the old gods who can still be found in the forest, about a time when men and women were free, before the nobles forced them into servitude. Sometimes, the ancient gods have spoken to you.

He had a sword, a family heirloom, an ancient weapon forged in Roman times, he said. But the Bishop of Winchester had heard of this sword, and his man, Geoffrey d'Ytane, accused your father of stealing it. A commoner could not defend himself from a noble, and your father died so that d'Ytane could have the sword.

Still, your father trained you well for the life of an outlaw in the forest. The people can stand no more of such abuse, and you will have your revenge.

Beatrice Ashe

ASPECTS

High Concept: GAMEKEEPER TURNED POACHER

Background: I KNOW THE FOREST BETTER THAN I DO MY OWN FACE

Wolf's Head: MY FATHER WAS FALSELY ACCUSED OF THEFT AND EXECUTED FOR IT

Belief: THE FOREST SHOULD BE FOR US ALL, NOT JUST FOR NOBLES

Goal: GEOFFREY D'YTANE KILLED MY FATHER—HE MUST PAY

SKILLS

Great (+4): Stealth

Good (+3): Notice, Shoot

Fair (+2): Athletics, Deceive, Fight

Average (+1): Crafts, Investigate, Physique, Rapport

STUNTS

Opening Volley: During your first turn in a conflict, you get a free action using Shoot, meaning you can both quickly aim (create an advantage) and fire (attack), or shoot twice.

Tread Where I Tread: If someone else is following your directions and spends a fate point, they can use the result of your overcome roll with Stealth instead of their own roll.

Spirit Speaker: You're aware of the presence of old gods and spirits, and can both speak to them and hear them when they are present, even without you making a gift. Further, both you and the old powers feel a connection; you gain +2 to Rapport rolls with the old spirits.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3**

Mental **1 2**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3

Simon Grave

You were always more worldly than most of your fellow clergy, preferring to go out among the ordinary people, eating and drinking with them, rather than being cloistered. You thought this the best way to find those most in need, and at first your church superiors agreed. But you did more than that. You started educating the peasants, even serfs, and not only believed but told them that there was no real difference between them and the nobility, merely that the nobility inherited their status. There is no divine order to the classes, and all men and women should be equal.

This did not go down so well when word got back to your superiors, but you knew you were right and refused to make amends. So the Bishop of Winchester excommunicated you. After much reflection and prayer, you decided you had to fight for your beliefs, and that you could better help the poor against their oppressors than the Church ever could.

Simon Grave

ASPECTS

High Concept: HAPPY CAROUSING FORMER PRIEST

Background: I PREFER THE COMPANY OF “ORDINARY” PEOPLE TO THAT OF NOBLES OR PRIESTS

Wolf’s Head: EXCOMMUNICATED BY THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

Belief: THE CHURCH TURNED ITS BACK ON ME. I DIDN’T TURN MY BACK ON THE PEOPLE IT SHOULD PROTECT

Goal: ONE DAY THE CHURCH WILL ACCEPT MY BELIEFS THAT ALL MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL

SKILLS

Great (+4): Empathy

Good (+3): Lore, Rapport

Fair (+2): Contacts, Fight, Investigate

Average (+1): Physique, Ride, Shoot, Will

STUNTS

Drinking Buddy: When you seek to learn information by carousing, you gain +2 to Investigate.

Nobody Suspects a Man of the Cloth: You gain +2 to Fight for your first attack during a physical conflict.

Read the Room: You can use Empathy instead of Notice to determine your turn order in a conflict, provided you have had a chance to converse with or observe the people involved for a few minutes.

STRESS

Physical **1** **2** **3**

Mental **1** **2** **3**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3

Rosamund Le Tellier

You were a daughter of a minor noble with a manor in Milton. Your mother died when you were very young, and your brother showed no interest in learning how to fight. Perhaps he would have been suited to the Church. But you had the interest and the ability, and your brother's lack of interest meant you got the training, though certainly as a woman you would never serve as a knight.

When your father died, your brother, the son, inherited everything. You'd like to say you were philosophical about it, but you were angry at having nothing, and went on a drunken binge. When you woke up, your brother was dead, and Geoffrey d'Ytane was calling for your arrest. Somehow, d'Ytane had a document granting him your brother's lands should he have no other heir, and your sword was in your brother's body. The document was deeply implausible to anyone who knew the situation, but it still stood; your father had despised Geoffrey d'Ytane as an opportunistic bully. As for the sword, you'd left it at home. You knew better than to take it drinking with you, given the mood you were in.

So you're an outlaw now, and your situation means you're thinking about injustice, not just as it applies to you, but more generally. You've found your calling, and there's more to it than revenge.

Rosamund Le Tellier

ASPECTS

High Concept: DISGRACED FORMER NOBLE

Background: I MAY BE A WOMAN, BUT I WAS TRAINED AS A KNIGHT

Wolf's Head: GEOFFREY D'YTANE KILLED MY BROTHER AND
FRAMED ME FOR IT

Belief: JUSTICE SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE, NOT JUST THOSE WITH
CONNECTIONS

Goal: I WILL REDEEM MY GOOD NAME

SKILLS

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Physique, Ride

Fair (+2): Contacts, Rapport, Notice

Average (+1): Athletics, Lore, Provoke, Shoot

STUNTS

Ebb and Flow: Once per conflict, you can take an extra action to create an advantage with Physique, using your strength, arms, and armour against your opponent.

An Honourable Fight: In a one-to-one battle, your attacks with a sword do two extra shifts of harm.

Inspirational Speech: If you create an advantage with Rapport by giving an inspirational speech, others get +3 rather than +2 when they invoke the aspect you created.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3 4**

Mental **1 2**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3

Thomas Willoughby

The nobility view the common soldier as disposable, even though they form the bulk of the armies and do all the work. It's the bloody knights everyone remembers. Well, they have the power and write the histories. But you've had enough of it. Enough of killing and dying because of stupid orders. Especially that sadistic shit Geoffrey d'Ytane, with his orders to kill peasants and burn their villages.

When he gave that order, you told him where to stick it. Bastard. If he hadn't had so many bloody fools around him, cheerfully carrying those orders out, you'd have cut him down right then. Well, maybe you'll get your chance in the future.

Thomas Willoughby

ASPECTS

High Concept: ANGRY VETERAN OF TOO MANY WARS

Background: I'M A SOLDIER, NOT A KNIGHT

Wolf's Head: I DIDN'T OBEY ORDERS TO SLAUGHTER PEASANTS.

YEAH, I'M A REAL SOFTIE

Belief: NO NOBLE HAS THE RIGHT TO GIVE ME, OR ANYONE ELSE, COMMANDS JUST BECAUSE OF THEIR STATION

Goal: ONE DAY I'LL HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO RETIRE IN OBSCURITY FROM THIS LIFE. MAYBE I'LL BUY A PUB

SKILLS

Great (+4): Provoke

Good (+3): Burglary, Fight

Fair (+2): Deceive, Shoot, Stealth

Average (+1): Athletics, Notice, Physique, Will

STUNTS

In Your Face: You can use Provoke to defend yourself against social attacks others make with Provoke, by shouting right back at them.

Charge!: You gain +2 to Fight in your first attack of a conflict, provided you moved at least one zone to engage the defender.

You Can't Bluff a Bluffer: You can use Deceive rather than Empathy to tell when someone is lying.

STRESS

Physical **1 2 3**

Mental **1 2 3**

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

REFRESH: 3